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Bakalářská práce
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Infinitival complements of the verb *help* in present-day spoken British English

Infinitivní komplementace slovesa *help* v současné mluvené britské angličtině

Praha 2019

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Ráda bych poděkovala vedoucí své bakalářské práce, doc. PhDr. Markétě Malé, Ph.D., za trpělivost, ochotu a veškeré cenné rady, které mi v průběhu zpracování práce poskytla.

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

V Praze dne 6. srpna 2019

.....

Abstrakt

Bakalářská práce zkoumá užívání holého infinitivu a infinitivu s částicí *to* jakožto komplementu slovesa *help* v současné mluvené britské angličtině. Soustředí se na četnost užívání každé z těchto forem infinitivu a na faktory ovlivňujících výběr jedné z nich. Materiál pro analýzu je čerpán z korpusu mluvené britské angličtiny Spoken BNC2014. Teoretická část práce vymezuje pojem infinitiv, popisuje jeho formy a funkce, a představuje různé přístupy k infinitivní komplementaci slovesa *help*, společně s jednotlivými studiemi, které se jí zabývají. Analýza se skládá ze dvou částí. V kvantitativní části je určena frekvence konstrukce ‚*help* + (NP) + holý infinitiv‘ a ‚*help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitiv‘. Kvalitativní část analýzy zkoumá tato spojení z hlediska faktorů ovlivňujících volbu formy infinitivu po *help*, podle toho, jak byly popsány v sekundární literatuře. Kromě analýzy faktorů přejatých ze sekundární literatury si práce všímá dalších rysů spojených s jednotlivými konstrukcemi.

klíčová slova: komplementace slovesa *help*, holý infinitiv, infinitiv s částicí *to*, faktory ovlivňující volbu formy infinitivu, současná britská mluvená angličtina

Abstract

The thesis investigates the use of the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive as a complement of the verb *help* in present-day spoken British English. It focuses on the frequency of each form of the infinitive and on factors influencing the choice between them. Material for the analysis is extracted from the corpus Spoken BNC2014. The theoretical part defines the infinitive, describes its forms and functions, and introduces different approaches to infinitival complements of *help* together with the studies concerned with them. The analysis consists of two parts. In the quantitative part the frequency of the construction ‘*help* + (NP) + bare infinitive’ and ‘*help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive’ is determined. The qualitative part analyses these constructions in terms of factors influencing the choice of the infinitive form after *help*, as they were described in secondary literature. Except for the factors adopted from secondary literature, attention is paid to other features connected to the individual constructions.

key words: complementation of the verb *help*, bare infinitive, *to*-infinitive, factors influencing the choice of the infinitive form, present-day spoken British English

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	9
2	Theoretical background	10
2.1	The infinitive.....	10
2.1.1	Definition of the infinitive	10
2.1.2	Temporal forms and syntactic functions of the infinitive	11
2.1.3	Forms of the infinitive.....	13
2.2	Two diachronic views of the bare infinitive as a complement of <i>help</i>	14
2.2.1	Rise of the bare infinitive after <i>help</i>	14
2.2.2	The bare infinitive as a traditional complement of <i>help</i>	15
2.3	Factors influencing the choice of the complement of <i>help</i>	15
2.3.1	Regional factors	16
2.3.2	Register factors	17
2.3.3	Semantic factors.....	19
2.3.4	Structural factors	20
3	Material and Method	23
3.1	Material.....	23
3.2	Method.....	28
4	Analysis	30
4.1	Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in the Spoken BNC2014	30
4.2	Historical development of complements of <i>help</i> in spoken British English	32
4.3	Structural factors influencing the speaker's choice of the complement.....	35
4.3.1	Presence of a noun phrase	35
4.3.2	The particle <i>to</i> before <i>help</i>	37
4.3.3	The inflected form of <i>help</i>	39
4.3.4	Transitivity of the complement	42
4.3.5	Complexity of the intervening material	43
4.3.6	A modal before <i>help</i>	46
4.3.7	The particle <i>not</i> before <i>help</i>	47
4.3.8	The adverb <i>just</i> before <i>help</i>	48
4.4	Semantic preference	48
5	Conclusion	51
6	References and Sources	55
7	Resumé	57

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Temporal forms of the infinitive.....	11
Table 2: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in BrE and AmE texts from the 1960s and 1990s.....	14
Table 3: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in BrE texts from the 1960s and 1990s from press sections of the corpora LOB and FLOB.....	16
Table 4: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in BrE and AmE written texts from the 1990s.....	17
Table 5: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in BrE spoken texts from the 1990s.....	18
Table 6: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in the Spoken BNC2014.....	30
Table 7: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	32
Table 8: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in the Spoken BNC2014 and the Spoken BNC1994DS.....	32
Table 9: Significance of changes in the complementation of <i>help</i>	33
Table 10: Distribution of <i>help</i> + NP + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	35
Table 11: Distribution of <i>help</i> + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	35
Table 12: Distribution of <i>help</i> + NP + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive in the Spoken BNC1994DS	37
Table 13: Distribution of <i>help</i> + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive in the Spoken BNC1994DS	37
Table 14: Distribution of <i>to help</i> + (NP) + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive (with <i>to</i> before <i>help</i>).....	38
Table 15: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive (without <i>to</i> before <i>help</i>).....	38
Table 16: Distribution of <i>to help</i> + NP + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	39
Table 17: Distribution of <i>to help</i> + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive	39
Table 18: Distribution of (the uninflected) <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	40
Table 19: Distribution of <i>helps/ed/ing</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	40
Table 20: Distribution of <i>helping</i> + bare infinitive and <i>help/es/ed</i> + bare infinitive	41
Table 21: Distribution of <i>helping</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive and <i>help/es/ed</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	41
Table 22: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive when the complement of <i>help</i> is a transitive verb.....	42
Table 23: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive when the complement of <i>help</i> is an intransitive verb.....	42
Table 24: Distribution of <i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive when a one-word object stands between <i>help</i> and the complement.....	44
Table 25: Distribution of <i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive when multiple-word material stands between <i>help</i> and the complement.....	44
Table 26: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive when a modal verb stands before <i>help</i>	46
Table 27: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive/ <i>to</i> -infinitive when a modal verb does not stand before <i>help</i>	46
Figure 1: Infinitival complements of <i>help</i> in BrE and AmE written and spoken texts from the 1960s and the 1990s.....	18
Figure 2: Distribution of <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare/ <i>to</i> -infinitive.....	31
Figure 3: Changes in the complementation of <i>help</i> in spoken British English according to the Spoken BNC1994DS and the Spoken BNC2014.....	33
Figure 4: Changes in the frequency of four <i>help</i> -constructions in spoken British English according to the Spoken BNC1994DS and the Spoken BNC2014.....	34

Abbreviations

AdjP Adjective phrase

NP Noun phrase

The Spoken BNC2014 The spoken component of the British National Corpus 2014

The Spoken BNC1994 The spoken component of the British National Corpus

The Spoken BNC1994DS Demographically-sampled (DS) component of the
Spoken BNC1994

LOB The Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus

FLOB The Freiburg–LOB Corpus of British English

BROWN The Standard Corpus of Present-Day Edited American English

FROWN The Freiburg-Brown corpus of American English

GloWbE The Corpus of Global Web-Based English

ABS Absolute frequency

REL Relative frequency

AmE American English

BrE British English

1 Introduction

The present thesis is concerned with the variation between the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive as a complement of the verb *help* in present-day spoken British English. It aims to contribute to the currently conducted survey of infinitival complementation of lexical verbs. Based on secondary literature, the thesis expects an increase in the frequency of the bare infinitive after *help* in present-day spoken British English. We also test the influence of structural factors on the speaker's choice of the infinitive form after *help*. The theoretical part uses English grammar books, namely the one from Biber et al. (1999), Dušková et al. (2012), Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Quirk et al. (1985) and Zandvoort (1965), to define the infinitive, describe its functions and forms, and show the constructions in which the verb *help* typically occurs. It also draws on several conducted researches, for example, the research of Mair (2002) who provides the data showing the growing popularity of the bare infinitive after *help* from the 1960s to the 1990s in both American and British English. The research conducted by Dixon (2005), Lind (1983) or Levshina (2018) provides an insight into the investigation of factors influencing the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help*.

The analysis consists of two parts. In the quantitative part the frequency of the construction '*help* + (NP) + bare infinitive' and '*help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive' in the Spoken BNC2014 is presented. The qualitative part analyses structural factors influencing the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help*. The factors are adopted from the studies that investigate their influence in written and spoken English of the 20th century and in present-day written English. The structural factors investigated in the analysis include, for example, the presence of a noun phrase between *help* and the complement, the particle *to* before *help* or the inflected form of *help*. Based on what we noticed when analysing the examples, we also suggest the possible existence of some other factors.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 The infinitive

2.1.1 Definition of the infinitive

The infinitive ((*to*) *work*) is one of the non-finite verb forms. Apart from the infinitive, the non-finite forms comprise the *-ing* participle (*working*) and the *-ed* participle (*worked*) (Quirk et al., 1985: 150). “The phrase in which one of these forms is the first or only word (disregarding the infinitive marker *to*) is called a non-finite verb phrase” (ibid.). The following examples illustrate the contrast between finite (ex. a-b) and non-finite (ex. c-d) verb phrases:

Finite verb phrase:

- (a) *He smokes*
- (b) *Mary is having a smoke*

Non-finite verb phrases:

- (c) *To smoke like that must be dangerous*
- (d) *The cigars smoked here tend to be expensive*

(Quirk et al., 1985: 151)

A clause whose verb element is a non-finite phrase is a non-finite clause (e.g. a *to*-infinitive clause: *She wants me to come tonight*) (ibid.: 992).

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 83) point out that there is no morphological difference between the plain form of the verb used in the infinitive, the imperative and the subjunctive. Out of these three constructions, only the infinitival one is non-finite:

- (a) *Max wanted [to change his name]* (2002: 1773)

It differs from the finite constructions in the following features:

- i. “Most infinitivals [...] contain the VP subordinator *to*¹: this is a clear marker of the infinitival.
- ii. [...] they do not take auxiliary *do* in negatives, etc. [...]
- iii. [...] they are almost invariably embedded in a larger clause.
- iv. [...] they usually have no subject, and where there is a subject it appears in accusative (or plain) form, not nominative [...]
- v. [...] the infinitival subordinator (used only when a subject is present) is *for*.”

(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 1173)

¹ Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 84) do not consider the infinitival marker *to* a part of the verb form: “It is not a (morphological) prefix but a quite separate (syntactic) word.”

2.1.2 Temporal forms and syntactic functions of the infinitive

Dušková et al. (2012: 265) distinguish between six temporal forms of the infinitive (Table 1).

infinitive	present	perfect/past
active		
simple	to write	to have written
progressive	to be writing	to have been writing
passive	to be written	to have been written

Table 1: Temporal forms of the infinitive (Dušková et al., 2012: 267)

The present infinitive expresses an action that happens simultaneously with the action expressed by the matrix verb (ex. a). The past/perfect infinitive expresses an action that occurred prior to the action expressed by the matrix verb (ex. b).

- (a) *He seemed to realize the difficulty*
- (b) *He is likely to have left* (Dušková et al., 2012: 267)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1173) do not distinguish between temporal forms of the infinitive, such as the present and the perfect/past infinitive. Rather, the infinitival “accepts” three auxiliaries: perfect *have* (e.g. *I expect to have done it soon*), progressive *be* (e.g. *I expect to be travelling all year*) and passive *be* (e.g. *I expect to be praised by them*).

The infinitive can have a variety of syntactic functions. Biber et al. (1999: 198) identify several syntactical roles of the infinitive clause illustrated by the following examples:

- (a) *To underestimate her would be foolish* [subject]
- (b) *Do you want me to send them today?* [direct object]
- (c) *It is difficult to maintain a friendship* [extraposed subject]
- (d) *My goal now is to look to the future* [subject predicative]
- (e) *I found it distressing to see her so ill* [object predicative]
- (f) *He is the third man to be murdered on the corner of the Donegal Road* [part of noun phrase]
- (g) *They're too big to fight* [part of adjective phrase]
- (h) *A little group of people had gathered (...) to watch the police activities* [adverbial]

(Biber et al., 1999: 198)
(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 1173)

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1175) distinguish between non-finites in complement functions, further divided into complements in clause structure (ex. a-e), in NP structure (ex. f), in AdjP structure (ex. g), and non-finites in non-complement function, i.e. functioning as modifiers (ex. h) or supplements (ex. i).

- (i) *He's a charlatan, to put it bluntly* (2002: 1176)

When a non-finite functions as a complement of the verb in the clause structure (ex. b), Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1176) recognize the presence of a “catenative construction”, in which the non-finite clause is a “catenative complement” and the verb in the matrix clause functions as a “catenative verb” (ex. j-k).

- (j) *I hope to finish soon*
 (k) *I advise you to sell it* (ibid.: 1177)

The construction illustrated by ex. (j) is referred to as the simple catenative construction since it lacks an intervening NP; example (k) illustrates the complex catenative construction with the intervening object *you*. The verb *help* can be used in both constructions (e.g. *She helped to clean the house* vs. *She helped me to clean the house*).

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 1778) differentiate between four subtypes of the complex catenative construction:

- | | | |
|------|---|--------------------|
| i. | <i>I arranged for them to go by bus</i> | [for-complex] |
| ii. | <i>I rely on them to look after themselves</i> | [oblique-complex] |
| iii. | <i>I resented their being given such favourable treatment</i> | [genitive-complex] |
| iv. | <i>I want them to be happy</i> | [plain-complex] |

The verb *help* belongs to the fourth group when it is used in the complex catenative construction (e.g. *She helped them to be happy*).

2.1.3 Forms of the infinitive

Two forms of the infinitive can be distinguished according to the presence or absence of the particle *to*: the bare infinitive and the *to*-infinitive (Dušková et al., 2012: 267).

The *to*-infinitive “occurs in a very wide range of constructions”, while the bare infinitive is very restricted. It occurs primarily as a complement to a small number of verbs, but these include the modal auxiliaries and supportive *do*, which makes it a very common construction (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 1173). Several categories of verbs which occur with the bare infinitive were identified:

- modals and supportive *do* (*can, must, dare, need, do, shall, had better, will, may, would rather*);
- sensory and perception verbs (*feel, hear, see, watch, notice, observe, overhear*);
- causative verbs (*have, let, make*) (ibid.: 1244)

Huddleston and Pullum (ibid.) list four verbs which allow the variation of the bare and *to*-infinitive: *ought, dare, know* and *help*.

Quirk et al. (1985: 1187-1205) distinguish three typical infinitive complementation patterns of the verb *help*:

- subjectless infinitive clause as a direct object (the *to*-infinitive complementation, e.g. *She helped to wash the dishes*);
- complex transitive complementation with two variants: the *to*-infinitive and the bare infinitive complementation (e.g. *She helped me to wash the dishes* and *She helped me wash the dishes*).

The variation between the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive as a complement of the verb *help* was described earlier by others, such as Zandvoort (1965: 6), who provides the examples in which the bare infinitive complements *help* without an intervening NP:

- (a) *He offered to help carry her basket*
- (b) *Got to the scullery and help wash up at the sink* (1965: 6)

The variation between the two infinitival complements has been observed and analysed lately also as a feature of other lexical verbs (e.g. *try, ask, know, assist, allow* or *enable*) (see e.g. Callies, 2013: 240).

2.2 Two diachronic views of the bare infinitive as a complement of *help*

Two different diachronic views of the variation between the bare and *to*-infinitive as a complement of the verb *help* exist. While the first of them describes and emphasizes the growing tendency to use the bare infinitive after *help*, the second one regards the variation between the two infinitival complements of *help* as a relic of earlier stages of the English language (Old and Middle English), when the bare infinitive was more common than nowadays (see e.g. Callies, 2013: 243).

2.2.1 Rise of the bare infinitive after *help*

When the variation between the two infinitive forms following *help* is analysed, most researchers focus on the growing popularity of the bare infinitive. Attempts are being made to identify why language users more and more frequently prefer the bare to the *to*-infinitive.

Mair (2002: 121-6) analysed the way the use of the bare infinitive after *help* was changing throughout the 20th century. Four corpora were used to make a comparison between two time periods: LOB (the texts of British English from 1961), Brown (comparable texts of American English from 1961), F-LOB (British English, between 1991 and 1992) and Frown (American English, between 1991 and 1992). He measured higher frequency of the bare infinitive in British and American English texts from the 1990s than in those from the 1960s (Table 2). The size of each corpus is one million words.

	BrE	AmE
1961	94:27	55:125
1991/92	77:122	44:203

Table 2: Infinitival complements of *help* in BrE and AmE texts from the 1960s and 1990s (Mair, 2002: 122)
(the *to*-infinitive on the left vs. the bare infinitive on the right)

Mair ascribes the rise of the bare infinitive after *help* to the process of grammaticalization of *help*. He claims that “the meaning of HELP has broadened, from “somebody lends support to somebody else in performing some task” to a more general notion of “contribute to/provide a favourable environment for” (Mair, 2002: 123-4).

This new acquired meaning is seen in the following example:

He made important contributions to a number of periodicals such as Leonardo, Regno, LaVoce, Lacerba and L'Anima which helped establish the respectability of anti-socialist, anti-liberal and ultra-nationalist ideas in pre-war Italy” (FLOB-J40)

The process of grammaticalization is accompanied by the loss of the particle *to* (seen e.g. in modal verbs, or auxiliary verbs).

2.2.2 The bare infinitive as a traditional complement of *help*

A different approach to the bare infinitive that complements *help* is adopted by researchers such as Fischer (2011: 109), who emphasizes the fact that in earlier stages of the English language the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive was not restricted to a small number of verbs, as it is today: “It was quite usual for one and the same verb to select both”. As for a complement of *help*, the bare infinitive is not considered a recent development. According to Fischer, “it must be stated for Middle English that it is not clear which construction after *help* was first” (ibid.: 132).

For Fischer (ibid.: 111) the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive depends on a “direct” or “indirect” relationship between what is expressed in the matrix verb and in the infinitival complement. The bare infinitive, for example, occurs when the activity expressed in the infinitival clause is simultaneous with that of the matrix verb, e.g. *king þe wise,/zeld me mi seruise./Rymenhild help me winne*² (Britton: 254)³.

2.3 Factors influencing the choice of the complement of *help*

Various factors have been suggested as influencing the language user’s choice between the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive as a complement of *help*. These include regional, register, semantic or structural factors. Structural factors seem to have enjoyed popularity recently, while the register or semantic ones have been questioned, found problematic and rejected by some.

² The translation: “The wise king, repay me my service, Rymenhild, help me to win“

³ *King Horn* (as cited in Britton, 1996)

2.3.1 Regional factors

The choice between the two forms of the infinitive after *help* is traditionally seen as being strongly influenced by the regional variety of English. Throughout the 20th century, the *to*-infinitive was considered a typical infinitival complement of *help* in British English, while the bare infinitive a typical complement of *help* in American English. Zandvoort (1965: 6) claims that “except in American English (...) *help* usually takes an infinitive with *to*”. Similarly, twenty years later, Quirk et al. (1985: 1206) observe that “[of] the two constructions with *help*, that with *to* is more common in BrE, and that without *to* is more common in AmE”. Biber et al. (1999: 735) also state that “AmE has an especially strong preference for the pattern *help* + bare infinitive”.

Mair (1995; 2002) was one of the first researchers to describe the growing popularity of the bare infinitive after *help* in British English. In his 1995 study, he used press sections of the corpus LOB (written British English, 1961) and FLOB (written British English, 1991 and 1992) to study changes in the frequency of four *help*-constructions (Table 3). The press category of these corpora comprises approximately 176 000 words.

	LOB (1961)	FLOB (1991-2)
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	1	8
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	3	7
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	4	21
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	14	6
Total: <i>help</i> /bare infinitive	5	29
Total: <i>help</i> / <i>to</i> -infinitive	17	13

Table 3: Infinitival complements of *help* in BrE texts from the 1960s and 1990s from press sections of the corpora LOB and FLOB (Mair, 1995: 264)

In his 2002 study (Chapter 2.2.1), Mair (2002: 121-2) concludes that “in 1961, the publication date of the texts assembled in the Brown and LOB corpora, the *to*-infinitive was the statistical norm in British English, whereas the bare infinitive dominated in American English”. However, “[t]he bare infinitive is now the statistical norm also in British English”. For Mair, it is no longer possible to rely solely on regional factors.

McEnery and Xiao (2005: 161-78) used 6 corpora (LOB, FLOB, BNCS (representing spoken British English), BROWN, FROWN and CPSA (representing spoken American English)) to study the variation between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help*. They found a noticeable difference in the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* in these two varieties. The normalized frequency (the number of instances per million words) of the bare infinitive after *help* in British English was 47.04, while in American English it was 196.5. Thus, according to McEnery and Xiao the regional factor should be taken into account when the reasons for the speaker's/writer's choice of the infinitive form are probed. They claim that "the difference in usage of HELP between BrE and AmE is statistically significant with respect to the choice of a full or bare infinitive" (ibid.: 164).

2.3.2 Register factors

Attempts were also made to describe the variation between the two infinitive forms from a stylistic point of view. The register has been said by many to be an important factor in influencing the speaker's/writer's choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help*. The bare infinitive is traditionally considered to be less formal than the *to*-infinitive (see e.g. Rohdenburg, 1996; Biber et al., 1999). Biber et al. (1999: 734) claim that the two infinitival complements after *help* are distributed differently across registers: "in academic prose c.55% of all infinitive clauses controlled by *help* are bare infinitive clauses" and "in conversation, fiction and news, bare infinitive clauses predominate (occurring 75-80% of the time)".

Several studies were conducted in which the difference between the use of the bare and *to*-infinitive in written and in spoken texts was analysed and in which the importance of stylistic factors was examined. In Mair's (2002: 121-9) study, the four corpora that were used for the analysis of infinitival complements of *help* (LOB, BROWN, FLOB, FROWN) consist of written texts. The results from FLOB and FROWN (written British and American English, 1991 and 1992) are summarized in Table 4 (presented already in Table 2, Chapter 2.2.1).

	BrE	AmE
1991/92	77:122	44:203

Table 4: Infinitival complements of *help* in BrE and AmE written texts from the 1990s (Mair, 2002: 122)
(the *to*-infinitive on the left vs. the bare infinitive on the right)

Separately, Mair investigated the construction *help* + infinitival complement in the spoken-demographic sample of the British National Corpus (The Spoken BNC1994). Table 5 shows the results. The size of the corpus is approximately 4 million words.

	without following NP	with following NP
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	34	92
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	22	44

Table 5: Infinitival complements of *help* in BrE spoken texts from the 1990s (Mair, 2002: 122)

Seeing the bare infinitive as prevalent in both spoken and written language, Mair (2002: 122) concludes that “[in] view of the parallels between current written and spoken usage in Britain an analysis of the variation between the two constructions as stylistic seems difficult to maintain”.

Similarly, McEnery and Xiao (2005) show that it is not possible to rely on the distinction between written and spoken language anymore when the use of the two forms of the infinitive following *help* is described. They suggest that since the *to*-infinitive was identified as the original form and the bare infinitive as a later development, the bare infinitive can be predicted to be more common in spoken than in written English. The written texts used in their study are from FLOB, LOB, FROWN and BROWN (each corpus approximately one million words). The corpora CPSA (over two million words of conversations) and BNCS (6.43 million words) represent spoken English. The expected preference for the bare infinitive in spoken language is supported by their data (Figure 1).

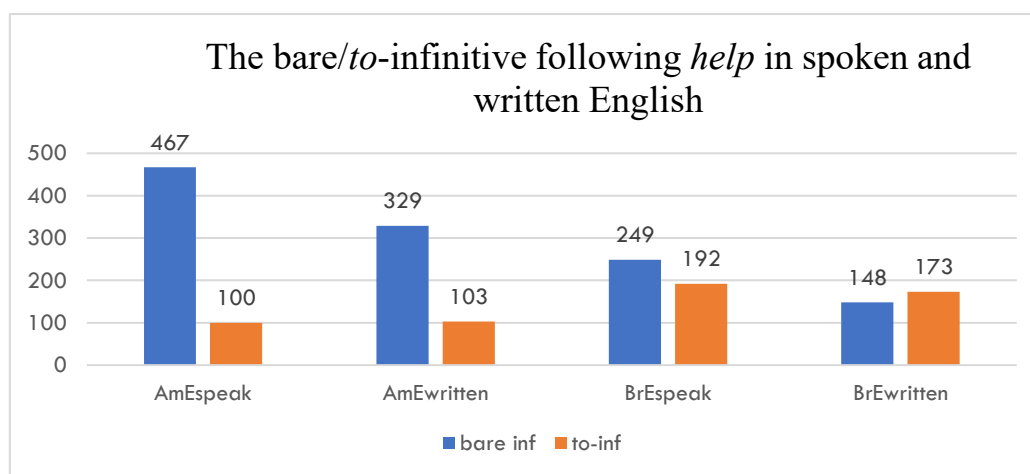


Figure 1: Infinitival complements of *help* in BrE and AmE written and spoken texts from the 1960s and the 1990s (McEnery and Xiao, 2005: 168)

However, the differences in the infinitival complementation of *help* in spoken and written language are small and the authors conclude that “while bare infinitives occur more frequently in spoken English, the spoken vs. written distinction does not significantly influence a language user’s choice between the two infinitive variants” (McEnery and Xiao, 2005: 169).

2.3.3 Semantic factors

The representative of a diachronic view of the variation between the bare and *to*-infinitive as a verbal complement, Fischer (2011), introduced a number of factors of semantic nature that she expects to influence the speaker’s/writer’s choice of the infinitival complement in Middle English. She suggests (2011: 110) that the bare infinitive indicates a more direct relationship between what is expressed in the matrix verb and in its complement, while the *to*-infinitive expresses a more indirect one with regard to parameters such as [+/- simultaneity of action or perception] and [+/- involvement of causer].

These factors are comparable to the semantic factors described by Dixon (2005), who analyses the bare/*to*-infinitive variation from a synchronic point of view. Dixon (2005: 201) focuses on the use of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* when *help* occurs in the complex catenative construction (i.e. when an intervening NP is present). He gives two examples to explain the semantic difference:

- (a) *John helped Mary to eat the pudding*
- (b) *John helped Mary eat the pudding* (2005: 201)

In example (a) it is expected that the helper was not involved in the activity itself but made it easier for Mary to do the activity (e.g. by guiding the spoon to her mouth). In example (b) the helper is expected to have done part of the activity himself, in this case he ate some part of the pudding.

To measure the extent to which semantics influences the choice of the infinitive form, however, seems problematic. Callies (2013: 242) comments on the analysis of semantic factors saying that “one major problem of this analysis is that the claimed semantic distinctions – if they do exist – are very subtle indeed and are often not supported by corpus data”. Mair (1995: 268) observes that the researchers focussing on semantic factors “have shown that semantic minimal pairs involving *to*- and bare infinitive after *help* can be constructed, but specific verbs and/or contexts seem to be required for the contrast to be teased out”.

The semantic view of the variation between the bare and *to*-infinitive after verbs like *help* was criticised also by McEnery and Xiao. In their 2005 study, they provide the following two examples from the corpora BROWN and BNC:

- (c) *Mrs Arthur Goldberg, wife of the Secretary of Labour, paints professionally and helps sponsor the Associated Artists' Gallery in the District of Columbia.* (BROWN)
- (d) *What a thoughtful company are Ford Motors. They don't only help to sponsor Sky's TV Soccer but close down a factory and various assembly lines so that their workers will have time to watch!* (BNC) (McEnery and Xiao, 2005: 173)

What they point out is that both Arthur Goldberg and the company Ford Motors must have been actively (directly) involved in sponsoring because the only way to sponsor something is to contribute directly by giving some money. Example (d) thus does not correspond to Dixon's statement that when the person/company is actively involved, the bare infinitive complements *help* (Dixon, 2005: 201).

2.3.4 Structural factors

Attention has been paid lately mainly to structural factors. As *help* appears in both the simple and the complex catenative construction, researchers have been interested in how the presence of a noun phrase influences the language user's choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive. Biber et al. (1999: 735) and Lind (1983: 269) observe that the bare infinitive occurs more frequently after *help* when there is an intervening noun. This statement is confirmed by the data from the study of McEnery and Xiao (2005: 176-7). Lind (1983: 269) attempts to explain the reason for this saying that "the tendency to drop *to* has been furthered by analogy to the regular construction with verbs like *see, hear, make* etc. An intervening nominal gives *help* a syntactic structure identical with the one found with these verbs".

The analysis of other structural factors relies mainly on Rohdenburg's (1996) observation that the choice between the two infinitival complements is determined by the complexity principle and the *horror aequi* principle. The complexity/cognitive principle argues that the more explicit grammatical option is favoured in a cognitively more complex environment. Rohdenburg (1996: 152) admits that the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive is not determined by the complexity principle only, and accepts the influence of other factors saying that "we must always expect the complexity principle to be in conflict with other factors, in particular with stylistic and semantic tendencies".

The *horror aequi* principle “involves the widespread and (presumably universal) tendency to avoid formally (near-)identical and (near-)adjacent (non-coordinate) grammatical elements or structures” (Rohdenburg, 2003: 263). Thus, when the particle *to* precedes *help* the tendency is to use the bare infinitive as a complement of *help*.

Callies (2013: 242) names several structural factors that influence the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive as a complement of a lexical verb. They are based on the complexity principle and the *horror aequi* principle - the form and the syntactic environment of the matrix verb (indicative, present tense forms or the *to*-infinitival form of the matrix verb are likely to trigger the bare infinitive), intervening material between the matrix and the complement verb (the tendency to prefer the *to*-infinitive when the intervening NP or the adverbial are long and complex) and negation of the complement (the tendency to opt for the *to*-infinitive when negation of the complement is present). Lind (1983) and McEnery and Xiao (2005) tested in their studies some of these factors on the verb *help*:

- Form of *help*

In his study, Lind (1983) analysed infinitival complements of the uninflected form *help* and the inflected forms *helps/helped* and *helping*. He says, “the omission of *to* occurs in my corpus much more frequently after the uninflected form *help* than after any of the inflected forms” (ibid.: 268). McEnery and Xiao’s data (2005: 183) partly support Lind’s statement.

The idea of the *horror aequi* principle playing a role in the choice between the two infinitive forms is supported by Biber et al. (1999: 737) who claim that the bare infinitive is preferred to the *to*-infinitive when *to* precedes *help* to avoid the sequence *to* + *help* + (NP) + *to* + verb.

In all McEnery and Xiao’s (2005) examples in which *help* was used in the passive, the *to*-infinitive complemented *help*, e.g. *Beginning with a problem posed by experience, the student must then be helped to gain command of data* (FROWN) (ibid.: 182). McEnery and Xiao explain that in the passive construction NP functions as a subject and the infinitive becomes a subject complement. This means that *to* cannot be omitted. An analogy between the verb *help* and verbs such as *make/see/hear* illustrates this point (e.g. *She made me build the house* but *I was made to build the house* -> *She helped me build the house* but *I was helped to build the house*) (2005: 182).

- Complexity of the intervening noun phrase or the adverbial

Levshina (2018) observes that the more words appear between *help* and its verbal complement the more difficult it is for the hearer/reader to recognize the complement as a part of the construction. Taking the complexity principle into account, “the longer the distance, the more likely it is that the infinitive will be marked by the particle *to*” (ibid.: 4). On the other hand, McEnery and Xiao (2005) provide an example in which the *horror aequi* principle apparently had more influence on the speaker’s choice of the complement than complexity of NP:

The President and I are determined to do all we can to help Israel and its neighbors in the Middle East stay on the path to peace... (CPSA)

(McEnery and Xiao, 2005: 179)

- Valency of the infinitive

Levshina (2018) used web-based material of seven varieties of English (English from Australia, Ghana, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica and the USA) to analyse the influence of valency of the verbal complement on the speaker’s/writer’s choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help*. The following examples illustrate an intransitive (ex. a) and a transitive (ex. b) verb as a complement of *help*:

(a) *May God help nations to live together in peace.*

(b) *Grow your business by helping your clients grow theirs* (Levshina, 2018: 8)

Her results reveal that only in Hong Kong English a transitive complement significantly increases the chance of the *to*-infinitive after *help* (ibid.: 15). Also, there are some “weak indications” (ibid.: 17) that the clausal complement increases the chance of the bare infinitive.

The studies focusing on structural factors are discussed in greater detail in the analytical part of the thesis where their results are compared to ours.

3 Material and Method

3.1 Material

The material for the analysis was extracted from the Spoken British National Corpus 2014 (hereafter the Spoken BNC2014). The Spoken BNC2014 is “an 11.5-million-word corpus of orthographically transcribed conversations among L1 speakers of British English from across the UK”. The conversations of 668 speakers were recorded in the years 2012–2016. The corpus is publicly available via Lancaster University’s *CQPweb* server⁴ (Love et al., 2017: 319).

The Spoken BNC2014 is the first publicly accessible follower of the spoken component of the original British National Corpus (hereafter the Spoken BNC1994) (ibid.: 320). The Spoken BNC1994 was composed between 1991 and 1994. It was designed in two parts: the demographically-sampled (DS) part (c. 40%) and the context-governed part (c. 60%). The Spoken BNC1994DS contains informal, everyday conversations of the volunteers and in total contains 4.2 million words of transcribed conversation (ibid.: 321). The aim of the compilers of the Spoken BNC2014 was “to collect data which occurred only in informal contexts – i.e. data which would be comparable to the Spoken BNC1994DS” (ibid.: 324). An attempt was made to avoid the shortcomings of the Spoken BNC1994, mainly in metadata collection (ibid.: 325).

Due to the existence of two comparable corpora, the analysis of the infinitival complementation of *help* in present-day British English can be complemented by comparison made between the frequency of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* in the Spoken BNC2014 and in the Spoken BNC1994DS (Mair, 2002: 122).

The first task in the investigation of the variation between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* in present-day spoken British English was to measure the frequency of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* in the Spoken BNC2014. Thus, all examples of four different constructions in which *help* is followed by the bare/*to*-infinitive were extracted from the corpus and were counted.

⁴ <https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/bnc2014spoken/>

These four constructions are:

- (a) *help* + NP + bare infinitive
- (b) *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive
- (c) *help* + bare infinitive
- (d) *help* + *to*-infinitive

All examples that were extracted from the Spoken BNC2014 were then analysed with respect to the individual structural factors influencing the British English speaker's choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive. Furthermore, we explored the role of the so-called "semantic preference" in the speaker's choice of the infinitive form (the list of factors and the definition of "semantic preference" given in Chapter 3.2). The original intention was to analyse the impact of the factors on the basis of 60 examples of the construction *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive and 60 examples of the construction *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive. Finally, we decided to include all examples into the analysis, which will make it possible to describe more precisely how the verb *help* behaves in present-day spoken British English, and to make comparisons with previous studies.

To gather all examples from the corpus four basic queries were formulated:

The query for the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive was formulated to allow the noun phrase to fill in up to four positions. It excludes the particle *to* to avoid the complementation of *help* by the *to*-infinitive. The word *but* was removed to avoid constructions like *I can't help but think...*

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4}
[class="VERB"] within u
```

Due to the large number of results found under this query (1086 examples), five narrower queries were formulated separately. In each of these queries the complement of *help* tagged in the original query as `[class="VERB"]` (i.e. it comprises all types of verbs) was tagged to represent one type of verb that can possibly function as a complement of *help*. Thus, five queries were formulated with the complement being defined in the corpus as an infinitive, a base form of lexical verb, *do*, *be* and *have*:


```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4} [pos="VVI"]  
within u
```

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4} [pos="V*0"]  
within u
```

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4} [pos="VDI"]  
within u
```

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4} [pos=" VBI"]  
within u
```

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4} [pos="VHI"]  
within u
```

The results for these five queries were checked manually, and the examples that did not represent the construction we aimed at were removed. These were mostly the cases where the position between *help* and its complement was supposed to be filled with NP but was not. When all examples were gathered, the results were checked with the examples from the original query where the verbal complement was tagged as [class="VERB"] to find out whether some example that would correspond to the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive was not missing in the results obtained from the narrower queries.

For the three remaining constructions the following queries were formulated:

help + NP + *to*-infinitive

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [(pos != "TO") & (word != "but"%c)] {1,4} [pos="TO"]  
[class="VERB"] within u
```

help + bare infinitive

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [pos="RR*"]* [class="VERB"] within u
```

help + *to*-infinitive

```
[taglemma="(help)_VERB"%c] [pos="RR*"]* [pos="TO"] [class="VERB"] within u
```

As with the first query, the results were checked manually and the examples that did not correspond to the constructions in question were removed. Moreover, several examples had to be removed which structurally corresponded with the constructions we aimed at, but which expressed a different meaning of the verb *help* than the one with which we were working in the analysis: “someone/something helps (someone/something) (to) do something” (ex. 0.1-0.3).

help + bare infinitive

- (0.1) ...*I think well I think when you 've enjoyed what you 've been doing I think I ca n't help think the best is yet to come sort of thing* (SL76 457)⁵

help + (NP) + *to*-infinitive

Several examples were found and removed in which the infinitival complement of *help* had the function of an extraposed subject. The subject position was filled by anticipatory *it*. This type of construction was not included in the analysis as it does not normally exhibit the variation between the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive. The following examples illustrate this type of construction:

- (0.2) *yeah yeah yeah and I think it helps for people at the back to have someone that knows what they 're doing at the front because then they can follow cos otherwise you 're having to mirror* (SAUJ 35)
- (0.3) S0619: *erm and like I know the stress affects them but you can tell like when they get on well anyway outside of class but in the exam they can be with anyone*
 S0618: *aha (.) yeah yeah it might actually help them in the exam to be with a complete stranger* (SLNV 42)

⁵ *Help* can be understood here in the same way as in the idiomatic expression “somebody cannot help (doing) something”, i.e. “it is impossible to prevent or avoid something” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/help_1?q=help)

On the other hand, the following cases were included in the analysis:

- Both the uninflected form of *help* and its inflected forms (i.e. *helps/helped/helping*)
- Both the finite form of *help* and its non-finite forms. Example (0.4- 0.5) illustrate *help* used as a gerund and a participle, respectively:

(0.4) *all these billions that are being spent should have been spent on educating mothers on doing lunchboxes and helping them (.) cook decent food at home rather than* (S7KK 986)

(0.5) *so that's the dog helping to make cheese sandwiches* (SMW8 3968)

- The examples containing intervening material between *help* and its verbal complement. The term intervening material comprises, for example, the adverbial, filler words (e.g. *you know, um*)⁶ or the speaker's self-correction.
- One example in which the object as a complement of *help* is realized by the prepositional phrase instead of the noun phrase:

(0.6) *....you spend more time chatting about what interests your little one which is a great way to help to him learn to talk there we go* (SPJR 172)

- Incomplete utterances, e.g. the verb complementing *help* lacks its obligatory complement that is either not expressed at all or is not expressed within the same utterance as the verb:

(0.7) S0281: *but she did the same thing she she (.) met some guy and felt sorry for him and got married to help him get a*
S0355: *green card visa* (S6AP 107)

All examples that were included in the analysis are listed in the appendix. They were divided into four categories corresponding to the four analysed constructions. If the same sentence contained more than one example of one of *help*-constructions, the examples were considered as individual instances. The examples are ordered according to their order in the corpus. If the example is mentioned in the text of the analysis, the number assigned to the example in the text also appears in the appendix to enable an easy retrieval, e.g. S7GW 4 (1).

⁶ Strictly speaking, fillers are different from other intervening material in that they are not syntactically integrated in the sentence structure.

3.2 Method

First, absolute and relative frequency of each of the four constructions in which *help* is followed by the infinitive was ascertained. Second, these results from the Spoken BNC2014 were compared to the results from the Spoken BNC1994 with the help of the log-likelihood ratio test to test the significance of the differences.

Third, all instances of the *help* + infinitive construction were used to investigate how various structural factors influence the British English speaker's choice between the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive. The impact of the following factors was examined:

1. Presence of a noun phrase (i.e. the simple vs. the complex catenative construction)
2. The particle *to* before *help* (i.e. the *horror aequi* principle)
3. The inflected form of *help* (i.e. *helps/helping/helped*)
4. Transitivity of the complement
5. Complexity of the intervening material
6. A modal before *help*
7. The particle *not* before *help* (i.e. the negative particle *not* before *help*)
8. The adverb *just* before *help*

“Semantic preference” was added to the analysis after we found out that *help* is used with specific semantically related words in the examples. Stubbs (2011: 65) defines the term semantic preference as “the relation, not between individual words, but between a lemma or word form and a set of semantically related words”.⁷ An attempt was made in our analysis to find out whether the speaker's choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* could be influenced by the relation of *help* to different sets of semantically related items. Focus was thus placed on semantically related words appearing with the construction *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive but not with *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive and vice versa.

⁷ Stubbs, for example, found out that the lemma *commit* tends to co-occur with a set of semantically related words such as *adultery*, *atrocities* or *sin*. Out of over 3000 occurrences of the word form *commit* in the 200-million-word corpus, 15% co-occurred with the word *suicide* (ibid.: 64). Sinclair observed that “many uses of words and phrases show a tendency to occur in a certain semantic environment, for example the word *happen* is associated with unpleasant things - accidents and the like” (Sinclair 1991: 112).

The studies that we used to compare the results from the Spoken BNC2014 to the results from different corpora were presented in the theoretical part of the thesis. We worked with four main studies:

- (a) Lind, A. (1983) ‘The variant forms help to/help Ø’
- (b) Levshina, N. (2018) ‘Probabilistic grammar and constructional predictability: Bayesian generalized additive models of *help* + (to) Infinitive in varieties of web-based English’
- (c) Mair, Ch. (2002) ‘Three changing patterns of verb complementation in Late Modern English: a real-time study based on matching text corpora’
- (d) McEnery, A. and Z. Xiao (2005) ‘HELP or HELP to: what do corpora have to say?’

4 Analysis

4.1 Infinitival complements of *help* in the Spoken BNC2014

Table 6 shows the number of examples that were found in the Spoken BNC2014 for each of the four constructions in which *help* is followed by the infinitival complement, together with the overall number of all instances of these four constructions. The results are presented in both absolute frequency (ABS) and relative frequency (REL, i.e. items per million words). The total size of the corpus is 11,422,617 words.

	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency (items per million words)
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	269	23.5
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	53	4.6
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	69	6
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	32	2.8
Total: <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	338	29.6
Total: <i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	85	7.4
Total	423	37

Table 6: Infinitival complements of *help* in the Spoken BNC2014

Concerning the variation between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help*, the results reveal a strong preference of present-day British English speakers for the bare infinitive. 338 examples (including both simple and complex catenative constructions) were found in which the bare infinitive follows *help*. In contrast to this number, only in 85 examples the *to*-infinitive functions as a complement of *help*. In other words, when the recorded speakers used the verb *help* complemented by the infinitive, they opted in 80% of cases for the bare infinitive (Figure 2).

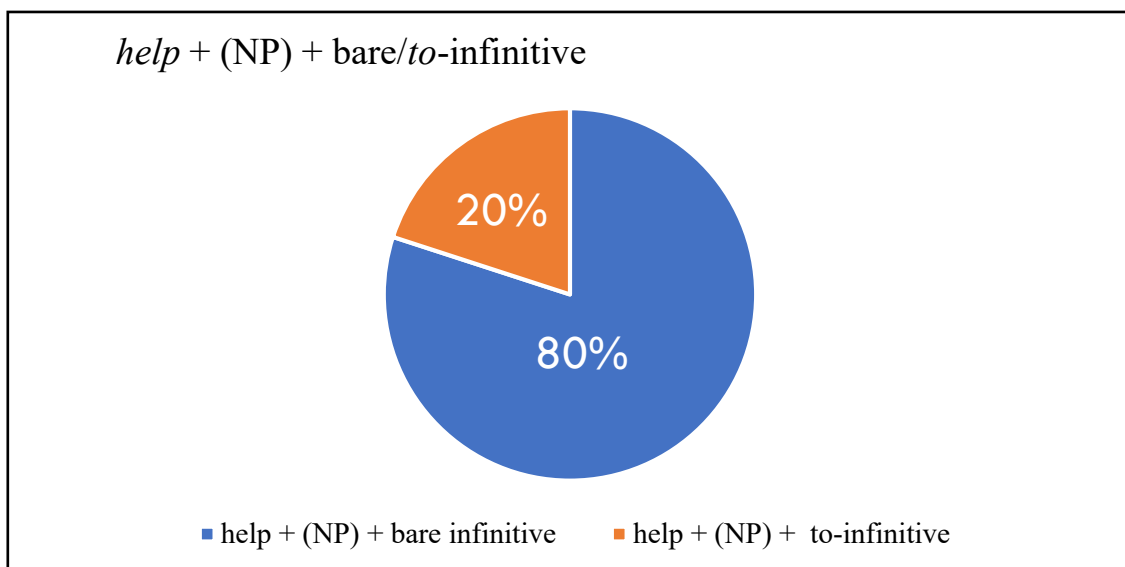


Figure 2: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare/*to*-infinitive

This distribution of the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive after *help* in the Spoken BNC2014 is similar as in the Corpus of Global Web-based English (GloWbE) that represents current web-based English. Levshina (2018) found out that in the texts representing the web-based English of Great Britain the bare infinitive is used as a complement of *help* in 70.3% of cases, while the *to*-infinitive occurs in 29.7%. The results for other web-based regional varieties of English were similar.

Different results were obtained by Xiao and McEnery (2005) on the basis of corpora representing written British English of the 1960s and written and spoken British English of the 1990s. In their study, the bare infinitive follows *help* in 52% of examples, and the *to*-infinitive in 48%. Subsequently, they write about “the British preference for full infinitives in relation to the domination of bare infinitives in the AmE data” (McEnery and Xiao, 2005: 165). The results obtained from the Spoken BNC2014 and from the GloWbE thus point to the growing popularity of the bare infinitive after *help*, accompanied by decrease in the use of the *to*-infinitive.

It is the complex catenative construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive that accounts for the high frequency of the bare infinitive after *help* in the Spoken BNC2014. This construction strongly prevails in the corpus over the remaining three, being used in 64% of cases. It is four times more frequent than the simple catenative construction *help* + bare infinitive (Table 7).

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	269	64%
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	53	12%
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	69	16%
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	32	8%
Total	423	100%

Table 7: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare/*to*-infinitive

4.2 Historical development of complements of *help* in spoken British English

To find out how the use of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* in spoken British English changed in the past twenty years a comparison was made between the results from the Spoken BNC2014 and from the Spoken BNC1994DS. The data for the infinitival complementation of *help* in the Spoken BNC1994DS were borrowed from the study of Mair (2002) (Chapter 2.3.2).

The spoken-demographic sample of the BNC1994 has 4,233,962 words. (Love et al., 2017: 321). The Spoken BNC2014 contains 11,422,617 words. Absolute frequencies were therefore normalized (the number of items per milion words, i.p.m.) to allow comparison. Both absolute and relative frequency of four *help*-constructions are shown in Table 8.

	Spoken BNC2014		Spoken BNC1994DS	
	ABS	REL (i.p.m.)	ABS	REL (i.p.m.)
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	269	23.5	92	21.7
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	53	4.6	44	10.4
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	69	6	34	8
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	32	2.8	22	5.2
Total: <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	338	29.6	126	29.8
Total: <i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	85	7.4	66	15.6
Total	423	37	192	45.3

Table 8: Infinitival complements of *help* in the Spoken BNC2014 and the Spoken BNC1994DS (Mair, 2002: 122)

The results show that in both spoken British English of the 1990s and of the 2010s the bare infinitive as a complement of *help* is preferred to the *to*-infinitive. However, there has not been a significant change in the use of the bare infinitive in spoken language in the last twenty years as we expected from the results of Xiao and McEnery (Chapter 4.1). Relative frequency of the bare infinitive after *help* is almost the same in the Spoken BNC1994DS as in the Spoken BNC2014. On the other hand, there has been a noticeable decline in the frequency of the *to*-infinitive functioning as a complement of *help* (Figure 3).

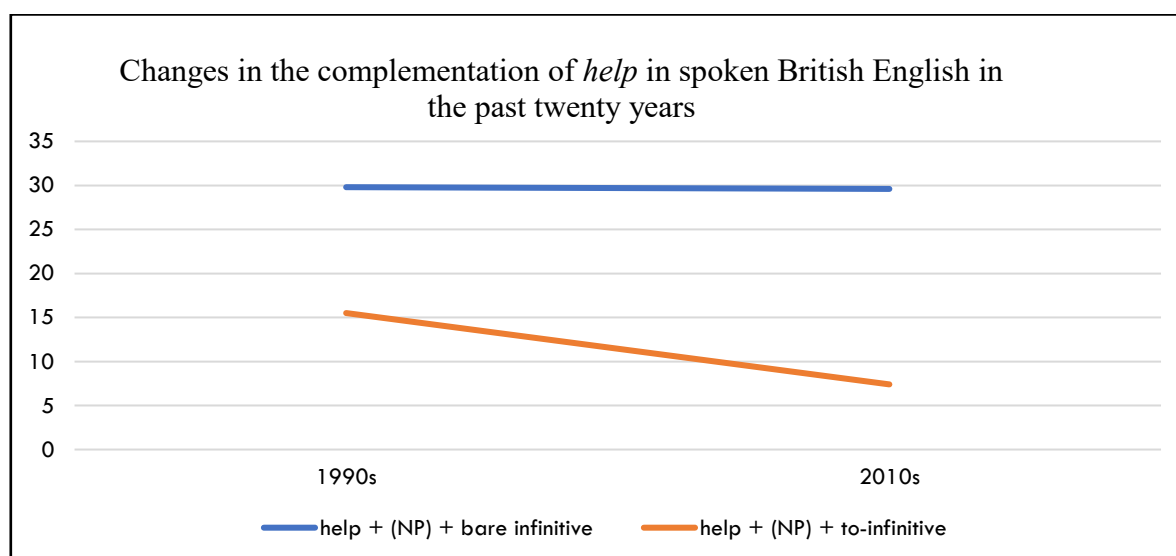


Figure 3: Changes in the complementation of *help* in spoken British English according to the Spoken BNC1994DS (Mair, 2002: 122) and the Spoken BNC2014

The log-likelihood ratio test was applied to find out whether the changes in the complementation of *help* are statistically significant or not. For the differences to be statistically significant, the calculated log likelihood value (LL) must be greater than 3.84 with the significance level $p < 0.05$.⁸ The results for each *help*-construction are shown in Table 9.

	LL	Significance level
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	0.45	$p > 0.05$
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	14.9	$p < 0.001$
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	1.78	$p > 0.05$
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	4.72	$p < 0.05$
Total: <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	1.43	$p > 0.05$
Total: <i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	19.3	$p < 0.0001$

Table 9: Significance of changes in the complementation of *help*

⁸ The LL calculations were performed using the ll-wizard tool available at: <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>

According to the test, the difference between the frequency of the construction *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive in the Spoken BNC1994DS and in the Spoken BNC2014 is not statistically significant, while in the case of the construction *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive it is. The significance of the difference applies mainly to the complex catenative construction, i.e. *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive. Thus, based on the two corpora, the *to*-infinitive after *help* is used much less nowadays than in the 1990s, especially in the complex catenative construction.

The test also proved the difference between the overall frequency of *help* followed by the infinitive (the bare or the *to*-infinitive) to be statistically significant. In the Spoken BNC1994DS relative frequency of the verb *help* followed by the infinitival complement is 45.3, while in the BNC2014 it is 37. The calculated log likelihood value is 5.28 with the significance level $p < 0.05$.

A detailed view of the changes in the frequency of four *help*-constructions demonstrates the growth of the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive accompanied by the decline of the remaining three constructions (Figure 4).

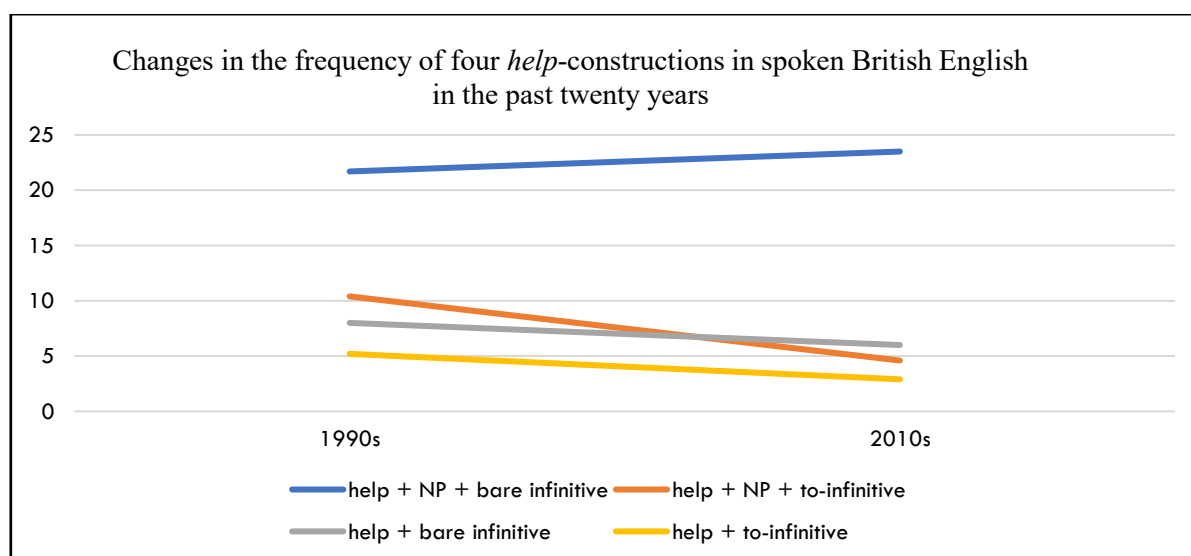


Figure 4: Changes in the frequency of four *help*-constructions in spoken British English according to the Spoken BNC1994DS (Mair, 2002: 122) and the Spoken BNC2014

Such results cannot support the theory developed by Mair to explain the rise of the bare infinitive after *help*. As described in Chapter 2.2.1, Mair argues for the grammaticalization of *help*. According to him, the verb *help* is becoming one of the auxiliaries, which is accompanied by the loss of the particle *to*. This theory thus presupposes the extensive use of the simple catenative construction, i.e. *help* + bare infinitive. Mair provides the

following example from the quotation base of the OED where *help* that is used in the simple catenative construction carries the meaning *to cause something*:

- (a) *Nor have they eliminated the unburned hydrocarbons which help produce the smog that blankets such a motor-ridden conurbation as Los Angeles.* (2002: 125)

The fact that the verb *help* is used nowadays mostly in the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive rather supports the theory of Lind (1983) who claims that today's use of the verb *help* is based on the analogy with the verb *see*, *hear*, *make* etc. (Lind, 1983: 268) (Chapter 2.3.4.).

4.3 Structural factors influencing the speaker's choice of the complement

4.3.1 Presence of a noun phrase

The first factor that was subjected to analysis is the presence/absence of a noun phrase between *help* and its infinitival complement. Tables 10 and 11 show the frequency of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* in the complex and the simple catenative construction, respectively. As for the complex catenative construction *help* + NP + bare/*to*-infinitive, the bare infinitive was chosen as a complement of *help* in 84% of examples. In contrast, the bare infinitive appears in 68% of examples representing the simple catenative construction *help* + bare/*to*-infinitive.

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	269	84%
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	53	16%
Total	322	100%

Table 10: Distribution of *help* + NP + bare/*to*-infinitive

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	69	68%
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	32	32%
Total	101	100%

Table 11: Distribution of *help* + bare/*to*-infinitive

There is a noticeable difference in the distribution of the two infinitival complements in the simple and the complex catenative construction. The frequency of the bare infinitive is 16% higher in the complex catenative construction than in the simple one. From a different point of view, a noun phrase is present in 80% of examples representing the complementation of *help* by the bare infinitive (269 out of 338) and in 62% of examples representing the complementation of *help* by the *to*-infinitive (53 out of 85). We would thus regard the presence of a noun phrase one of the factors that can play a significant role in the present-day British English speaker's choice of the infinitive form after *help*.

The following examples demonstrate the complex catenative construction with the bare and the *to*-infinitive complementing *help*, respectively:

- (1) *yeah they helped you find it* (S8XE 117)
- (2) *and how charities (.) help people to be fulfilled* (SMRV 2531)

The same difference between the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive in the simple and in the complex catenative construction (16%) was found out by Lind for written English of the 1960s. In Lind's study, when a noun phrase stands between *help* and its complement the bare infinitive is used as a complement of *help* in 61% of examples, while in the case of the simple catenative construction the bare infinitive appears only in 45% of cases. Lind claims that he "found the forms of *help* occurring with an intervening nominal to have a proportionally higher degree of omission than the corresponding forms without an intervening nominal" (Lind, 1983: 269).

When the results from the Spoken BNC2014 are compared to the results from the Spoken BNC1994DS it seems that the presence of a noun phrase between *help* and its complement is nowadays more influential in terms of the speaker's inclination to use the bare infinitive after *help* than it was in the 1990s. This is not surprising as the comparison between the two corpora has revealed the growing popularity of the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive and a steep decline of the construction *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive, accompanied by a mild decline of the constructions *help* + bare infinitive and *help* + *to*-infinitive (Chapter 4.2). Tables 12 and 13 show that there is a smaller difference between the frequency of the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* when NP is present and when not in the BNC1994DS than in the Spoken BNC2014, i.e. in the examples from the BNC1994DS the bare infinitive is used in 68% of cases when a noun phrase is present and in 61% of examples when it is absent.

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	92	68%
<i>help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	44	32%
Total	136	100%

Table 12: Distribution of *help* + NP + bare/*to*-infinitive in the Spoken BNC1994DS (Mair, 2002: 122)

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + bare infinitive	34	61%
<i>help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	22	39%
Total	56	100%

Table 13: Distribution of *help* + bare/*to*-infinitive in the Spoken BNC1994DS (Mair, 2002: 122)

Xiao and McEnery (2005: 176) comment on the results they obtained for British and American English of the 1960s and the 1990s saying that “the increase in the proportion of bare infinitives contributed by an intervening NP is only statistically significant in AmE. In the BrE data, however, the effect of an intervening NP is unpredictable and not statistically significant”.

4.3.2 The particle *to* before *help*

Another structural factor that was investigated is the presence of the particle *to* before *help*. In several studies (e.g. McEnery and Xiao, 2005; Levshina, 2018), this has proved a very influential factor, inducing the speaker to use the bare infinitive after *help*. The high frequency of the bare infinitive as a complement of *help* that is preceded by the particle *to* is generally ascribed to the *horror aequi* principle, i.e. the attempt to avoid formally identical elements (Chapter 2.3.4). As Table 14 demonstrates, 96 examples of *to help* followed by the infinitival complement were found in the Spoken BNC2014 (including both simple and complex catenative constructions). In 90% of occurrences the bare infinitive complements the form *to help*.

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>to help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	86	90%
<i>to help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	10	10%
Total	96	100%

Table 14: Distribution of *to help* + (NP) + bare/*to*-infinitive (with *to* before *help*)

In contrast, when the particle *to* does not stand before *help*, the bare infinitive complements *help* in 77% of examples (Table 15).

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	252	77%
<i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	75	23%
Total	327	100%

Table 15: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive (without *to* before *help*)

The bare infinitive as a complement of *help* that is preceded by the particle *to* seems to be almost a rule in present-day spoken British English. There is a marked difference between the frequency of the two infinitive forms when *to* precedes *help* and when not. The presence of the particle *to* increases the probability of the bare infinitive. We would thus consider the presence of the particle *to* before *help* an influential factor in present-day spoken British English in terms of the speaker's choice between the bare infinitive and *to*-infinitive after *help*.

Xiao and McEnery's results show even bigger difference between the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive when *help* is and when it is not preceded by *to*. In their corpora "when the controlling verb *help* is preceded by *to*, bare infinitives make up 88% of examples. Otherwise, they only account for around 60% of examples" (2005: 180-1).

Moreover, in the corpora they used the bare infinitive is especially frequent when *to* precedes *help* that is used in the simple catenative construction. Among their examples for written American English of the 1960s and the 1990s the pattern *to help to* does not exist. Their conclusion is that "intervening NPs after *to help* may lead to an increase in the proportion of full infinitives" (McEnery and Xiao, 2005: 180-1). Similarly, Lind in his study found no examples of the construction *to help to* (Lind, 1983: 266). He attempts to provide the explanation for the non-existence of this construction saying that "[the] non-existence of the

catenative group *to help to do* in the corpus may be due to a reluctance, conscious or unconscious, to repeat *to* on grounds of euphony” (ibid.).

The results from the Spoken BNC2014 do not directly confirm these findings, i.e. they do not show that the bare infinitive would be significantly more frequent as a complement of *to help* in the simple catenative construction than in the complex one. Rather, as seen in Tables 16 and 17, the *to*-infinitive after *to help* is rare in both types of construction.

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>to help</i> + NP + bare infinitive	66	90%
<i>to help</i> + NP + <i>to</i> -infinitive	7	10%
Total	73	100%

Table 16: Distribution of *to help* + NP + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>to help</i> + bare infinitive	20	87%
<i>to help</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	3	13%
Total	23	100%

Table 17: Distribution of *to help* + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive

Example (3) shows *to help* followed by the bare infinitive in the simple catenative construction. Example (4) illustrates *to help* complemented by the bare infinitive in complex catenative construction:

- (3) *he’s been reading these books about food to help prevent cancer (.)* (S8LS 854)
 (4) *do you want to help us make some Parma Violet vodka at some point ?* (S2EF 2383)

4.3.3 The inflected form of *help*

The next feature whose influence on the speaker’s choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive after *help* was analysed in various studies (e.g. Lind, 1983; Xiao and McEnery, 2005; Levshina, 2018) is the form of *help*. In Lind’s analysed data, the inflected form of *help* significantly increases the chance of the *to*-infinitive. In the Spoken BNC2014 the uninflected *help* is complemented by the *to*-infinitive in 20% of cases (Table 18), while the inflected *help* is followed by the *to*-infinitive in 25% of instances (Table 19). The examples in which the uninflected *help* is preceded by *to* were excluded from the analysis in order to eliminate the influence of the *horror aequi* principle.

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	125	80%
<i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	32	20%
Total	157	100%

Table 18: Distribution of (the uninflected) *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>helps/ed/ing</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	127	75%
<i>helps/ed/ing</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	43	25%
Total	170	100%

Table 19: Distribution of *helps/ed/ing* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive

The frequency of the *to*-infinitive is higher when it complements the inflected form of *help* than when the uninflected one. However, the difference between the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive in the two cases is not great (5%). In comparison to the above structural factors, the inflected form of the verb *help* does not seem to be a factor of great importance. Also, the log-likelihood ratio test measured a low log likelihood value 0.86 with the significance level $p > 0.05$, showing the difference between the frequency of the *to*-infinitive when complementing the inflected and when the uninflected form of *help* as insignificant.

Different results were obtained by Lind, who found a significant difference between the frequency of the bare and *to*-infinitive after the uninflected and after the inflected form of *help*. He claims, “the omission of *to* occurs in my corpus much more frequently after the uninflected form *help* than after any of the inflected forms” (1983: 268). At the same time, however, he rejects the statement of Poutsma (1924: 425) that the omission of the particle *to* is “practically confined to the infinitive”. This claim corresponds neither to the results of Lind nor to the results from the Spoken BNC2014.

In the example (5) the uninflected *help* is complemented by the bare infinitive and in the example (6) the inflected *help* is followed by the *to*-infinitive:

(5) *er can I help you choose ?* (S5YY 114)

(6) *m I find that really helpful though cos it helps us to get a lot more examples in for our poster* (SGHZ 772)

When the individual inflected forms of *help* are analysed, similarities can be found between the results of our analysis and the results of Lind (1983). In his material, Lind found no example of *helping* followed by the bare infinitive in the simple catenative construction, i.e. the construction *helping do*. In contrast to this, he found 12 examples of *helping to do* (Lind, 1983: 268). Similarly, Levshina found out that in present-day web English the form *helping* “substantially increases the chances of the *to*-infinitive“, and that “[in] all varieties, the form *helping* without the Helpee has the highest chances of being used with the *to*-infinitive” (Levshina, 2018: 15). Table 20 shows that the construction *helping do* is attested in the Spoken BNC2014, but in 93% of all examples representing the simple catenative construction, other forms of *help* are used, i.e. the *help/helps/helped*.

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>helping</i> + bare infinitive	5	7%
<i>help/helps/helped</i> + bare infinitive	64	93%
Total	69	100%

Table 20: Distribution of *helping* + bare infinitive and *help/s/ed* + bare infinitive

The form *helping* is a more frequently used inflected form of *help* when *help* is complemented by the *to*-infinitive than when by the bare infinitive. It is used in 15% of examples representing the complementation of *help* by the *to*-infinitive (Table 21).

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>helping</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	5	16%
<i>help/helps/helped</i> + <i>to</i> -infinitive	27	84%
Total	32	100%

Table 21: Distribution of *helping* + *to*-infinitive and *help/s/ed* + *to*-infinitive

Thus, it seems that also in present-day British English the construction *helping do* is not popular, and speakers tend to prefer the *to*-infinitive to the bare infinitive after the form *helping*.

4.3.4 Transitivity of the complement

The analysis of factors influencing the choice of the infinitive form after *help* also includes the investigation of transitivity of the verbal complement of *help*. Verbal complements of *help* were divided into intransitive verbs (including copular verbs and passive constructions) and transitive verbs (including ditransitive and complex transitive verbs). The verb was included in the category “transitive verb” when it required the object, but the object was not expressed or it was expressed but not within the same utterance as the verb (e.g. it was expressed by the second speaker of the conversation). While Levshina in her study formed a third category, transitive verbs that are complemented by a clause (a finite or a non-finite one), we decided to include these cases in the category “transitive verbs” since the number of examples was small (18).

Table 22 shows the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive as a complement of *help* when the complement is a transitive verb. A transitive verb complements *help* in the form of the bare infinitive in 81% of cases. When the complement of *help* is an intransitive verb it has the form of the bare infinitive in 76% of examples (Table 23).

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive (a transitive v.)	264	81%
<i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive (a transitive v.)	62	19%
Total	326	100%

Table 22: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive when the complement of *help* is a transitive verb

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive (an intransitive v.)	74	76%
<i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive (an intransitive v.)	23	24%
Total	97	100%

Table 23: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive when the complement of *help* is an intransitive verb

First, the results reveal that the verb *help* tends to be complemented mainly by transitive verbs (326 vs. 97 examples). The distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive is similar when the complement is a transitive and when an intransitive verb (81% vs. 76% for the bare infinitive). These results are comparable to the results for the uninflected/inflected form of *help* (80% vs. 75% for the bare infinitive, Chapter 4.3.3). As with the inflection of *help*, the calculated log likelihood value is low, 0.21. Comparing the results for transitivity of the complement to the results for the factors such as the presence of a noun phrase or the particle *to* before *help* transitivity of the complement is likely to be a factor of minor importance.

Our discovery that transitivity does not significantly influence the choice of the infinitive form corresponds to Levshina's finding that only in a small number of the varieties of English transitivity increases the incidence of the *to*-infinitive. In most varieties of English, "there is no strong bias in either direction" (Levshina, 2018: 8).

In the case of the intransitive complements of *help*, copular verbs / passive constructions (auxiliary *be* + past participle) seem to complement *help* more frequently as *to*-infinitives (ex. 8), while intransitive lexical verbs as bare infinitives (ex. 7). From 74 examples of the construction *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive with an intransitive verb as a complement, in 12% of cases (9 examples) the complement is a copular/auxiliary verb and in the remaining 88% of examples it is an intransitive lexical verb. When the *to*-infinitive form of an intransitive verb complements *help* (23 examples) the complement is a copular verb in 7 examples, i.e. 30% and a lexical verb in the remaining 70%.

(7) *I ca n't help you cheat* (S2LD 1142)

(8) *probably the army helped him to be honest because you you ca n't turn up drunk to work can you there ?* (SPG4 1241)

4.3.5 Complexity of the intervening material

We also decided to test the assumption that the tendency to prefer the *to*-infinitive to the bare infinitive as a complement of a lexical verb increases with complexity of the intervening material, e.g. a complex object or an inserted adverbial (cf. the cognitive principle, Chapter 2.3.4). In our analysis, like in other studies (e.g. Xiao and McEnery, 2005), complexity of the intervening material is determined by the number of words the material consists of.

The analysis was divided into two parts. The first part concerns the analysis of the examples representing the simple catenative construction in which the intervening material includes adverbials, filler words, speakers' self-correction and the particle *not* indicating negation of the complement. The second part of the analysis deals with the examples representing the complex catenative construction. The object is here regarded as part of the category "intervening material." Thus, the two-word material consists, for example, of a two-word object or of a one-word object and a one-word adverbial.

As for the simple catenative construction only one example was found in which a filler word stands between *help* and the bare infinitive and one in which a two-word filler is present between *help* and the *to*-infinitive:

- (9) *and help er do finish off something he started cos* (SJKD 194)
 (10) *and then studied it thinking that would help you know to make the contacts* (SAZX 269)

Regarding the complex catenative construction, when a one-word object stands between *help* and its complement the *to*-infinitive complements *help* in 16% of examples (Table 24). When more than one-word material is present between *help* and its complement the *to*-infinitive is used in 21% of examples (Table 25).

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + one-word object + bare infinitive	242	84%
<i>help</i> + one-word object + <i>to</i> -infinitive	46	16%
Total	288	100%

Table 24: Distribution of *help* + NP + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive when a one-word object stands between *help* and the complement

	Occurrences	Frequency
<i>help</i> + multiple-word material + bare infinitive	27	79%
<i>help</i> + multiple-word material + <i>to</i> -infinitive	7	21%
Total	34	100%

Table 25: Distribution of *help* + NP + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive when multiple-word material stands between *help* and the complement

The frequency of the *to*-infinitive is higher when multiple-word material is inserted between *help* and the infinitive than when a one-word object stands between them. Still, the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive is similar in the two cases with the bare infinitive significantly predominating to the *to*-infinitive (84% and 79%). From a different point of view, when *help* is complemented by the bare infinitive multiple-word material stands between *help* and the infinitive in 10% of examples and when *help* is complemented by the *to*-infinitive it is present in 13% of cases. Complexity of the intervening material thus does not seem to enjoy great prominence among factors influencing the choice of the infinitive form after *help*.

When *help* is complemented by the bare infinitive, multiple-word material consists in 6% of examples of two words, in 3% of three words and in 1% of four words. When it is complemented by the *to*-infinitive, it consists of two words in 9% of examples and of three and four words in 2% of instances in both cases. Such results do not correspond to those of Levshina who argues for the influence of linguistic distance. In present-day web-based English, “[w]ith each word between *help* and the infinitive, the odds of the *to*-infinitive credibly increase” (2018: 14).

A conclusion similar to ours was made by Xiao and McEnery, who claim that “the number of intervening words does not significantly influence the language user’s choice of a full or bare infinitive. As such, while infinitives that are spaced more than five words apart from *HELP* are found to take *to* in our corpora, it is also not infrequent for them to omit *to*” (2005: 179).

As for the individual realization of the intervening material, the material consisting of a one-word object is usually realized in the examples by an objective personal pronoun (11), an indefinite pronoun (12), a reflexive pronoun or a reciprocal one:

- (11) *so I will your mum said you 'd come over and help me hang the studio* (S2ZU 2377)
- (12) *maybe yeah maybe this will help someone learn more authentic English* (SX3B 422)

When the material consists of two words it is usually a grammatical and a lexical word:

- (13) *the grape skins have yeast in them that 's what helps the wine ferment* (S3C6 686)
- (14) *and erm I kind of wan na be like that myself but I also want to help my kids to be like that* (SRGA 468)

When it consists of four words it is, for example, realized by an object and an adverbial:

- (15) *there is a lady that erm helps me outside the lesson to look after young children...*
(SES2 160)

4.3.6 A modal before *help*

Another structural feature that was subjected to analysis is a modal verb standing before *help*. The verbs that were included in the category of modal verbs are: *can, could, might, may, must, have to, shall, will, would, ought, need, dare* and *used to* (Dušková, 2012: 192). Our basic assumption was that a modal that is followed by the bare infinitive (in this case the basic form *help*) may significantly increase the chance of the bare infinitive used as a complement of *help*. Table 26 and Table 27 show the results. When a modal verb stands before *help* the bare infinitive is used in 82% of examples. When a modal verb does not precede *help* the bare infinitive complements *help* in 79% of examples.

	Occurrences	Frequency
a modal + <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	78	82%
a modal + <i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	17	18%
Total	95	100%

Table 26: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive when a modal verb stands before *help*

	Occurrences	Frequency
no modal + <i>help</i> + (NP) + bare infinitive	260	79%
no modal + <i>help</i> + (NP) + <i>to</i> -infinitive	68	21%
Total	328	100%

Table 27: Distribution of *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive when a modal verb does not stand before *help*

The frequency of the bare infinitive is only very slightly higher when a modal verb stands before *help* than when it does not. From a different perspective, a modal verb precedes *help* in 23% of examples in which *help* is complemented by the bare infinitive and in 20% of examples in which it is complemented by the *to*-infinitive. Thus, it does not seem that the presence a modal verb before *help* would significantly influence the choice of the infinitive form after *help*. Our original assumption did not turn out to be true.

When complemented by the bare infinitive the most commonly used modal verb preceding *help* is *will* that appears in 42% of examples, followed by *can* used in 25% of them.

The following examples (16 and 17) illustrate the speakers' most typical use of *will*, expressing an offer/willingness of the subject (intrinsic modality), and the most frequent use of *can*, expressing ability of the subject (intrinsic modality):

- (16) *So, he said oh oh alright then another pint of Peroni so I said oh I've got a few to get so he said oh I'll help you carry them back* (SNNG 1281)
- (17) *I do n't want to just stick him somewhere where it 's just he 's there and so I 've got somewhere for him I want him to be somewhere where they can help him develop* (SNRQ 751)

The most frequent modal verbs in the examples representing the construction *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive are *will* and *could*. These occur in five and four examples, respectively. The following example shows the verb *could* expressing the potential ability of the subject (intrinsic modality):

- (18) *you could help us to get further* (SAUR 4114)

4.3.7 The particle *not* before *help*

An attempt was also made to analyse the influence of the particle *not* standing before *help* on the speaker's choice of the infinitive form. The particle *not* preceding *help* indicates negation of this verb or functions as a means of negation of the modal verb standing before *help*. The following construction was thus looked for:

- (auxiliary/modal) + not + *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive/*to*-infinitive

Both the particle's full form *not* and its reduced form *n't* were taken into account.

Only nine examples altogether were found in the corpus in which the particle *not* stands before *help*. *Help* is followed by the *to*-infinitive in three out of the nine examples, and by the bare infinitive in the remaining six.

Since the number of examples is small, no clear-cut conclusion can be drawn about the relationship between the particle *not* before *help* and the bare/*to*-infinitive complementing *help*.

In the examples extracted from the corpus, the particle *not* in most cases functions as a means of negation of the modal verb:

- (19) *I ca n't help you cheat* (S2LD 1142)

4.3.8 The adverb *just* before *help*

Furthermore, the examples from the corpus revealed the repeated occurrence of the adverb *just* modifying the verb *help* in the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive. Nine such examples were gathered. Two of them are:

(20) *to just help me enjoy myself* (SBG4 607)

(21) *well I 'm going with my pushy Canadian friend to --ANONplace so I 'm hoping that she 'll just help me get some free samples* (SKPB 374)

One example was found for the construction *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive. In this example *just* is used twice in one clause, preceding *help* and standing between the particle *to* and the infinitival complement:

(22) *so whatever is left in the fridge or freezer just help yourselves to just eat it up* (SAA3 28)

It is not possible to speak about the tendency of speakers to associate the adverb *just* with the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive due to the overall small number of examples in which the adverb *just* is present and because of the fact that the Spoken BNC2014 contains five times as many examples of the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive as of the construction *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive. Thus, the adverb *just* is used in 3.3% of the examples representing the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive and in 1.9% of examples representing the construction *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive. Still, the repeated occurrence of the adverb *just* before *help* that is complemented by the object and the bare infinitive attracted our attention when compared to the remaining three constructions in which the adverb *just* is either present in one example or in none of them.

4.4 Semantic preference

In Chapter 3.2, semantic preference was defined as the relation between a word form and a set of semantically related words. When analysing factors which influence the choice of the infinitive form after *help*, we noticed that in the examples the verb *help* is associated with two distinctively different sets of semantically related words. These different sets correspond to two types of complementation of *help* – the bare and the *to*-infinitive.

When the bare infinitive complements *help*, the complement is typically a dynamic verb denoting an observable action (*play*, *write*, *wrap*...):

- (23) *I need --ANONnameF to help me play* (S2EF 1267)
- (24) *would you like to help him write his plays?* (S74A 207)
- (25) *all these billions that are being spent should have been spent on educating mothers on doing lunchboxes and helping them (.) cook decent food at home...* (S7KK 986)

In other cases, the bare infinitive after *help* is realized by a dynamic verb expressing an instantaneous action (ex. 26-27) or denoting a change of state (ex. 28-29):

- (26) *it helps them break the gum* (S36Z 7)
- (27) *...get someone to help me lift the basket anyway onto the escalator* (S36Z 273)
- (28) *thirty odd people um helps you develop those skills of not not minding so much being in the focus* (S4RF 236)
- (29) *presume if you 're gon na eat the veg you 're going to help grow it* (SJRQ 1114)

The dynamic verbs used in the examples above usually appear in the corpus more than once as complements of *help* taking the bare infinitive form (e.g. *write*, *sleep*, *develop*). None of them functions as a complement of *help* in the form of the *to*-infinitive. The *to*-infinitive complementing *help* is in most cases a stative verb describing a mental state (ex. 30-32). The verb *understand* is used in the construction *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive five times.

- (30) *...I think it is er it it helps an audience to understand that this could be one 's reality* (S35K 1524)
- (31) *.... the Eastern philosophies they talk about sort of twelve major meridians and lung is one of them (.) and so yeah might help you to know what the exercises are* (S5JX 874)
- (32) *mm sort of trying to help him to realise that you know ?* (SYZX 86)

Stative verbs rarely complement *help* in the form of the bare infinitive. This different distribution of dynamic and stative verbs can also be observed when the complement of *help* is a copular verb. While current copulas seem to be associated with both the bare and *to*-infinitive (ex. 35), resulting copulas complement *help* only as bare infinitives (ex. 33-34):

- (33) *I was just trying to help you become calmer* (SN3D 626)
- (34) *NONnameF was gon na get any more sessions this term to help her get better at cycling* (SBKH 10)
- (35) *It also helps me to feel connected* (SNJP 2326)

Even though this may be a mere coincidence, when the bare infinitive complements *help*, the conversation in many cases centres around the business and finance-related topics or the topics of entrepreneurship and employment. The phrase *to help someone get a job* is used five times in the corpus, while the phrase *to help someone to get a job* does not appear in any example. Almost none of the examples representing the construction *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive is related to the theme of job, paying, selling, buying etc. The following examples show some other finance-related phrases which appear in the examples representing the construction *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive:

- (36) *...it 's going to help me pay off the little debt that I had so I 'm going to be okay* (S6GC 223)
- (37) *we 're hoping it will help us manage our bills better* (S6ZU 698)
- (38) *I think we are motivated by money because that 's that helps you buy things and people seem to want to buy things more than they want to be morally competent...* (S4PC 157)
- (39) *any money for things only I think to help me pay the deposit for the house* (SUVL 484)

To sum up, it seems that the verb *help* requiring a verbal complement is connected to different sets of semantically related words in the Spoken BNC2014. While dynamic verbs are associated with the complementation of *help* by the bare infinitive, stative verbs occur in the complementation by the *to*-infinitive. Also, some topics of conversation may co-occur predominantly with one type of the infinitive form. Thus, we believe that semantic preference may play a role in the present-day British English speaker's choice of the infinitive form after *help*. It is, however, very difficult to measure how influential semantic preference is.

5 Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to examine the use of the bare and *to*-infinitive as a complement of the verb *help* in present-day spoken British English, and thereby contribute to the research into the English non-finite system of complementation that has lately attracted the attention of many researchers. Egan points out that “the English non-finite system of complementation is still evolving” and that “this evolution is reflected in synchronic variation” (2008: 90). The corpus Spoken BNC2014 served as a source for the analysis.

Our initial hypothesis that in present-day spoken British English the bare infinitive is much more common than the *to*-infinitive as a complement of *help* was confirmed by our data. In 80% of examples in which the verb *help* is complemented by the infinitive, it is in the form of the bare infinitive. The high frequency of the bare infinitive can be attributed to the popularity of the complex catenative construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive that is four times more frequent in the corpus than the simple catenative construction *help* + bare infinitive. From the four analysed *help*-constructions this one appears in 64% of examples.

In Levshina’s texts representing current web-based British English the bare infinitive complements *help* in 70.3 % of instances (2018). Thus, the bare infinitive after *help* seems to be more popular nowadays in spoken than in written British English though it significantly prevails over the *to*-infinitive in both varieties. As expected, the frequency of the bare infinitive after *help* is much higher (80%) in our data than in the data for written British English of the 1960s and written and spoken English of the 1990s (52%) presented by Xiao and McEnery (2005). This implies the growing popularity of the bare infinitive as a complement of *help* in the last decades.

However, the increase in the use of the bare infinitive after *help* in spoken language in the last twenty years does not seem to be significant. The comparison between the results from the Spoken BNC2014 and the Spoken BNC1994DS revealed a steep decline in the use of the construction *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive, a mild decline in the use of the constructions *help* + bare infinitive and *help* + *to*-infinitive, and a only slight increase in the use of the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive. The log-likelihood ratio test showed the changes in the complementation of *help* by the *to*-infinitive as significant, while the changes in the complementation of *help* by the bare infinitive as insignificant.

As for the analysis of factors influencing the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive, Table 28 summarizes the results. It shows the distribution of the bare and *to*-infinitive when the feature is present (+) and when it is absent (-). The factors are ordered according to how much the two distributions differ and how influential the factors thus seem to us. The difference between the two distributions is presented in the right column. Due to a small number of examples, two factors, the particle *not* before *help* and the adverb *just* before *help*, are not included in the table. They are discussed below together with the other factors.

	+		-		
	Bare inf.	<i>To</i> -inf.	Bare inf.	<i>To</i> -inf.	Diff.
1. Presence of a noun phrase	84%	16%	68%	32%	16%
2. The particle <i>to</i> before <i>help</i>	90%	10%	77%	23%	13%
3. The inflected form of <i>help</i>	75%	25%	80%	20%	5%
4. Transitivity of the complement	81%	19%	76%	24%	5%
5. Complexity of the intervening material	79%	21%	84%	16%	5%
6. A modal before <i>help</i>	82%	18%	79%	21%	3%

Table 28: The results for factors influencing the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive as a complement of *help*

Due to the growing usage of the bare infinitive after *help* between the 1960s and nowadays and due to its higher popularity in spoken than in written language, the frequency of the bare infinitive is higher than it used to be in all situations, including those in which the *to*-infinitive used to be especially frequent. Thus, most factors seem to be less influential and their effects are less visible in present-day spoken British English than in British English of the 1960s and 1990s, and in present-day written British English (Lind, 1983; Xiao and McEnery, 2005; Levshina, 2018). We analysed the following factors:

1. Presence of a noun phrase - This is the only factor that seems to be of similar importance today as it was in the 1960s (Lind, 1983). In both time periods the chances of the use of the bare infinitive are significantly lower when *help* is used in the construction without NP than when NP is present. Regarding spoken British English, due to more radical changes in the complex catenative construction (a steep decline of the construction *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive and a mild growth of *help* + NP + bare infinitive) than in the simple catenative construction, the presence of a noun phrase proved a factor of greater importance today than in the 1990s.

2. The particle *to* before *help* - As with the presence of a noun phrase, there is a significantly higher frequency of the bare infinitive when *to* stands before *help* than when not. *The horror aequi principle* thus seems to be influential in present-day spoken British English. Its effects are even more visible in British English of the 20th century as Xiao and McEnery found out similar frequency as we did when *to* stands before *help* but much lower when not (60%) (Xiao and McEnery, 2005) (Chapter 4.3.2).
3. The inflected form of *help* – This factor seems to be less influential than the previous two ones. The frequency of the bare infinitive is only a bit higher when the uninflected form of *help* is used than in the case of its inflected form. Such results are different from the results of Lind for written British English of the 1960s. He claims that in his data the bare infinitive occurs much more frequently after the uninflected than the inflect form of *help* (Lind, 1983) (Chapter 4.3.3).
4. Transitivity of the complement – There does not seem to be much influence of transitivity of the complement on the choice of the infinitive form. As Levshina found out that only in the English variety of Hong Kong there is a marked effect of transitive complement increasing the chance of the *to*-infinitive, we were curious about the results for spoken British English (Levshina, 2018). The distribution of the two infinitive forms is very similar when the complement is an intransitive and when a transitive verb. No clear effect of transitivity can be thus observed in our data.
5. Complexity of the intervening material - The influence of the cognitive principle that we expected also cannot be confirmed by our data. In the complex catenative construction, the frequency of the *to*-infinitive is only slightly higher when the material consisting of more than one word stands between *help* and the complement than when the material is realized by a one-word object. 7 examples were found in which three words intervene between *help* and the bare infinitive in contrast to 1 example in which they stand between *help* and the *to*-infinitive. In both our study and the study of Xiao and McEnery the cognitive principle proved less influential than the *horror aequi principle* (Xiao and McEnery, 2005).

6. A modal before *help* - Our assumption that a modal followed by a lexical verb in the form of the bare infinitive may encourage the use of the bare infinitive as a complement of the lexical verb also proved false. The distribution of the two infinitive forms is almost the same when a modal is present before *help* and when it is not. From a different point of view, a modal verb stands before *help* in 23% of examples representing the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive and in 20% of examples representing the construction *help* + NP + *to*-infinitive.

7. The particle *not* before *help* – Due to a small number of examples found in the corpus (9), no conclusion was drawn about how the particle *not* functioning as a means of negation of the verb *help* or of the modal verb standing before *help* influences the choice between the bare and *to*-infinitive. However, the particle *not* does not seem to be confined to one infinitive form as six examples were found in which *not* stands before *help* that is complemented by the bare infinitive and three in which it stands before *help* complemented by the *to*-infinitive.

8. The adverb *just* before *help* – When analysing the factors adopted from secondary literature, we noticed the repeated occurrence of the adverb *just* before *help* in the complex catenative construction (9 ex.). In the remaining three constructions *just* stands before *help* in zero or in one example. No clear-cut conclusion was made for the scarcity of evidence and due to significantly higher frequency of the construction *help* + NP + bare infinitive than the frequency of the remaining three constructions.

9. Semantic preference - The verb *help* is associated with different sets of semantically related words in the examples. These sets seem to correspond with the two infinitive forms complementing *help*. While the verb complementing *help* in the form of the bare infinitive is usually a dynamic verb, *to*-infinitives are realized mostly by stative verbs. Also, when the bare infinitive functions as a complement of *help* the conversation in several cases centres around money, job etc. This topic does not occur when *help* is complemented by the *to*-infinitive. There seems to be a possible influence of the words with which the verb *help* co-occurs on the choice of the form of the infinitive though the extent of the influence is difficult to estimate.

The hypothesis that in present-day spoken British English the bare infinitive is preferred to the *to*-infinitive as a complement of *help* was confirmed. The frequency of the bare infinitive significantly grows with NP present between *help* and its complement and with the particle *to* before *help*. Next time, it would be useful to investigate factors on larger material or to make a comparison between the results for present-day spoken British English and present-day written British English. The Written BNC2014 is expected to be released to the public this year.

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6.2 Sources

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7 Resumé

Bakalářská práce si klade za cíl prozkoumat užívání holého infinitivu a infinitivu s částicí *to* jakožto komplementu slovesa *help* v současné mluvené britské angličtině. Zaměřuje se na četnost užívání každé z infinitivních forem a na faktory, které mohou u mluvčího hrát roli při volbě jedné z nich. V současné době se řada studií zabývá změnami probíhajícími v nefinitní komplementaci lexikálních sloves. Kromě slovesa *help* se předmětem zkoumání stala komplementace sloves *find*, *want*, *begin* nebo *start*. Práce by ráda přispěla do této oblasti výzkumu.

Kapitola 2.1 teoretické části práce definuje pojem infinitiv a popisuje jeho formy a funkce. Dále se zaměřuje na infinitivní komplementaci slovesa *help* a typy konstrukcí, ve kterých se toto sloveso vyskytuje. Opírá se přitom o anglické mluvnické od autorů Biber et al. (1999), Dušková et al. (2012), Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Quirk et al. (1985) a Zandvoort (1965). Huddleston and Pullum (2002) mluví o slovesu *help* jako o katenativním slovese, které se objevuje ve dvou typech konstrukcí. V první konstrukci, tzv. simple catenative construction, po slovesu *help* přímo následuje jeho infinitivní komplement, např. *help (to) live*. V druhém typu konstrukce, tzv. complex catenative construction, stojí mezi slovesem a jeho komplementem nominální fráze, např. *help me (to) live*.

Následující kapitola (2.2) představuje dva odlišné diachronní pohledy na infinitivní komplementaci slovesa *help*. První, všeobecně rozšířený pohled zaznamenává rostoucí užívání holého infinitivu jako komplementu slovesa *help* od 2. poloviny 20. století a snaží se o vysvětlení tohoto trendu (Mair, 1995, 2002; Lind, 1983). Druhý, odlišný přístup se dívá na holý infinitiv po slovese *help* jako na pozůstatek z období staré a střední angličtiny, kdy byla komplementace dvěma formami infinitivu běžná u velkého množství lexikálních sloves (Fischer (2011)).

Kapitola 2.3 se zabývá čtyřmi základními typy faktorů popsanych v sekundární literatuře jako faktory ovlivňující volbu komplementu slovesa *help*: regionální, stylistické, sémantické a strukturální. Anglické mluvnické se soustředí zejména na vliv regionální varianty angličtiny, popisující holý infinitiv jako typický komplement slovesa *help* v americké angličtině, zatímco infinitiv s částicí *to* převládá v angličtině britské (Quirk et al., 1983). Z hlediska stylistického se zkoumají rozdíly v distribuci dvou infinitivních forem po *help* v jazyce mluveném a psaném. Dixon (2005) představuje faktory sémantické povahy, když navrhuje, že užívání holého infinitivu a infinitivu s částicí *to* po *help* je ovlivněno tím, do jaké míry se konatel děje podílí na vykonávání aktivity vyjádřené infinitivem.

Strukturálním faktorům věnuje teoretická část práce detailnější pozornost než faktorům předchozím, protože se stávají předmětem analýzy práce. Jako faktory mající významný vliv na volbu komplementu *help* se tradičně uvádí přítomnost nominální fráze mezi slovesem *help* and komplementem, přítomnost částice *to* před *help* (vliv tzv. principu *horror aequi*) a komplexnost nominální fráze (vliv tzv. principu komplexnosti) (Lind, 1983; Xiao a McEnery, 2005; Levshina, 2018).

Metodologická část práce popisuje postup, kterým byly z korpusu britské mluvené angličtiny Spoken BNC2014 získány všechny příklady reprezentující jednu z následujících čtyř konstrukcí:

help + bare infinitive (holý infinitiv)

help + NP + bare infinitive (holý infinitiv s nominální fází po *help*)

help + *to*-infinitive (infinitiv s částicí *to*)

help + NP + *to*-infinitive (infinitiv s částicí *to* a s nominální frází po *help*).

Následně byly z analýzy vyřazeny příklady, které formálně odpovídaly jedné z těchto konstrukcí, avšak svým významem se neslučovaly s hledanými příklady, tedy neodpovídaly významu *pomoci (někomu/něčemu) něco udělat*. Šlo například o případ, kdy infinitiv představoval extraponovaný podmět, přičemž v počáteční pozici podmětu stálo anticipační *it*.

Analýza se skládá ze dvou částí. V kvantitativní části (kapitola 4.1) bylo zjištěno zastoupení obou forem infinitivů jako komplementů slovesa *help*. Bylo nalezeno 338 příkladů reprezentující konstrukci *help* + (NP) + bare infinitive a 85 příkladů reprezentující konstrukci *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive. Sloveso *help* je tedy komplementováno holým infinitivem v 80% případů a infinitivem s částicí *to* ve 20%. Výsledky potvrdily naši hypotézu, že mluvčí současné britské mluvené angličtiny výrazně preferují jako komplement slovesa *help* holý infinitiv před infinitivem s částicí *to*. Vysoká frekvence holého infinitivu je způsobena zejména velkou oblibou konstrukce *help* + NP + bare infinitive. Ze čtyř zkoumaných konstrukcí se slovesem *help* je tato užita v 64% případů. Porovnání s výsledky ze studií Linda (1983) nebo Xiao and McEneryho (2005) ukazuje na rostoucí oblibu holého infinitivu od druhé poloviny 20. století.

Kapitola 4.2 analyzuje změny, které proběhly v oblasti komplementace slovesa *help* v mluvené britské angličtině za posledních dvacet let. Výsledky z korpusu Spoken BNC2014 byly porovnány s výsledky z korpusu BNC1994DS. Porovnání neukazuje na signifikantní nárůst užívání holého infinitivu po *help* v mluvené britské angličtině během posledních dvou

dekád. Z výsledků můžeme pozorovat výrazný pokles užívání konstrukce *help* + (NP) + *to*-infinitive doprovázený pouze mírným nárůstem užívání konstrukce *help* + NP + bare infinitive. Zároveň také výsledky ukazují na mírný pokles užívání konstrukce *help* + bare infinitive a *help* + *to*-infinitive. Test statistické signifikance (the log-likelihood ratio test) ukázal změny v komplementaci slovesa *help* infinitivem s částicí *to* jako signifikantní, zatímco změny v komplementaci *help* holým infinitivem jako nesignifikantní.

V kvalitativní části (kapitola 4.3) byly použity všechny příklady z předchozí části analýzy ke zkoumání jednotlivých strukturních faktorů ovlivňujících volbu mezi holým infinitivem a infinitivem s částicí *to* jako komplementu slovesa *help*. Faktory byly vybrány na základě sekundární literatury. Výsledky analýzy potvrdily očekávanou výrazně vyšší frekvenci holého infinitivu v příkladech, ve kterých je přítomna nominální fráze mezi slovesem *help* a jeho komplementem, než v případech její absence. V těchto příkladech je užito holého infinitivu v 84% případů. V příkladech bez nominální fráze holý infinitiv komplementuje *help* v 68% případů. Přítomná nominální fráze zvyšuje pravděpodobnost užití holého infinitivu po *help* a označili jsme ji tedy za faktor, který může v současné britské mluvené angličtině při výběru komplementu slovesa *help* hrát roli.

Zjistili jsme také vyšší frekvenci holého infinitivu v případech, ve kterých stojí před slovesem *help* částice *to*, než v případech, kdy tomu tak není. Tento výsledek jsme očekávali na základě předpokládaného působení tzv. principu *horror aequi* (snaha vyvarovat se opakování identických slovních tvarů). V 90% případů, ve kterých slovesu *help* předchází částice *to*, je užito holého infinitivu jako komplementu slovesa *help*. V opačném případě holý infinitiv komplementuje *help* v 77% případů. Byla tedy potvrzena naše očekávání ohledně možného vlivu částice *to* před *help* na volbu formy infinitivu po *help*.

Vzhledem k výsledkům studií Linda (1983) a Levshiny (2018) jsme očekávali výrazně častější užívání infinitivu s částicí *to* v případě užití flektivní formy slovesa *help* než v případech, kdy je užito základního tvaru *help*. Pokud je užita jedna z forem *helps/helped/helping* infinitiv s částicí *to* komplementuje *help* ve 25% případů. V případech se základním tvarem *help* je to 20% případů. Rozdíl v distribuci dvou forem infinitivů je v těchto případech poměrně malý a v porovnání s předchozími zkoumanými faktory se flektivní forma slovesa *help* jeví jako faktor, který hraje při volbě komplementu minoritní roli.

Výsledky neukázaly ani významný vliv tranzitivity komplementu na volbu formy infinitivu. V 81% případů, kdy je komplementem slovesa *help* tranzitivní sloveso, je užito ve formě holého infinitivu. Pokud je komplementem sloveso intranzitivní, objevuje se ve formě

holého infinitivu v 76% případů. Vzhledem k neprokázanému vlivu tranzitivity ve studii Levshiny (2018) nebyly výsledky překvapující.

Výrazný nárůst pravděpodobnosti infinitivu s částicí *to* spojený s rostoucí komplexností materiálu mezi *help* a infinitivem, který jsme očekávali na základě popsaného vlivu tzv. principu komplexnosti, se neprokázal. Zkoumali jsme zejména příklady reprezentující konstrukci s přítomnou nominální frází. Pokud je v nich materiál více než jednoslovný, infinitiv s částicí *to* je užit ve 21% případů. V případě jednoslovného předmětu se tato forma infinitivu objevuje v 16% případů. Pouze v 1 příkladě jsou přítomna tři slova mezi slovesem *help* a infinitivem s částicí *to*. Naproti tomu v 7 příkladech stojí tři slova mezi slovesem *help* a holým infinitivem.

Nepotvrdilo se ani očekávané výrazně častější užívání holého infinitivu v případě, kdy stojí před slovesem *help* modální sloveso, než v případě, kdy tomu tak není. Pokud je užito modálního slovesa, holý infinitiv komplementuje *help* v 82% případů. Pokud modální sloveso před slovesem *help* nestojí, holý infinitiv funguje jako komplement slovesa *help* v 79% případů.

Co se týče vlivu negace slovesa *help* či negace modálního slovesa stojícího před *help*, bylo nalezeno pouze 9 příkladů, ve kterých částice *not* stojí před slovesem *help*. Ve třech z nich bylo *help* doplněno infinitivem s částicí *to*, v 6 holým infinitivem. Pro malý počet příkladů nebyl vyvozen žádný závěr.

Následně je představeno adverbium *just* jako jeden z potenciálních faktorů ovlivňující volbu komplementu. Objevili jsme 9 příkladů, ve kterých adverbium *just* stojí před slovesem *help* v konstrukci *help* + NP + bare infinitive. V případě zbylých tří konstrukcí se vždy jedná o jeden či žádný příklad. Pro malý počet příkladů a výrazně častější konstrukci *help* + NP + bare infinitive oproti zbylým třem konstrukcím nebyl vyvozen žádný jasný závěr.

Bylo také navrženo, že ve volbě formy infinitivu by mohla hrát roli i tzv. sémantická preference, tzn. spojení mezi slovním tvarem a skupinou sémanticky příbuzných slov. Sloveso *help* se v příkladech vyskytuje s určitými sémanticky příbuznými slovy při komplementaci holým infinitivem, se kterými se ale vyskytuje zřídka při komplementaci druhou formou infinitivu, a naopak. Zatímco komplement ve formě holého infinitivu je většinou dynamické sloveso, komplement ve formě infinitivu s částicí *to* bývá stavové sloveso. Všimli jsme si také spojení finanční tematiky diskutované v konverzích s komplementací holým infinitivem.

Závěr práce shrnuje získané výsledky analýzy. Vzhledem k rostoucí oblíbenosti holého infinitivu se většina faktorů ukázala jako méně vlivných pro volbu infinitivu (nebo jejich působení je z výsledků méně zřejmé) než v angličtině minulého století. Jediný faktor, u kterého byla prokázána podobná míra vlivu jako u psaného jazyka 60.let (Lind, 1983), je přítomnost nominální fráze mezi slovesem *help* a komplementem.

Seznam použité literatury poskytuje přehled všech gramatik, článků, knih a dalších zdrojů, ze kterých bylo čerpáno.

Příloha obsahuje všechny příklady, které byly využity v analýze. Příklady jsou rozděleny do čtyř kategorií odpovídajících čtyřem zkoumaným konstrukcím. Seřazeny jsou podle pořadí výskytu v korpusu. U každého příkladu je uveden kód a případné číslo, pokud byl příklad užit v analytické části práce (1).